Financial security to older persons

†2228. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of aged persons in the country;

(b) whether Government have formulated any policy to provide financial security to older persons;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the efforts being made by Government for implementing the said policy; and

(e) the extent of improvement experienced in the condition of older persons consequent upon the efforts made by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) As per the census 2001, the population of persons aged 60+ years and above is 7,66,22,321.

(b) to (d) The Government has adopted National Policy on Older Persons, which *interalia* addresses issues relating to the financial security of the senior citizens. Further, the Central Government has substantially enhanced the additional Central Assistance to the States/Union Territories with effect from 1.4.2006 for payment of Old Age Pension to the destitute old from Rs. 75/- to Rs. 200/- per month per person with a request to the States to make matching contributions. The Ministry periodically reviews the implementation of the policy through the meetings of the Inter-Ministerial Committee and National Council on Older Persons.

(e) No such study has been conducted.

Schemes for eradication of untouchability

†2229. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the word 'Dalit' is constitutional;

(b) the view of the Ministry thereon;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.